

# PURPOSE: Getting started

## Defining the Problem and Why?

### WHAT IS THE PROBLEM YOU ARE TRYING TO SOLVE AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO SOLVE IT?

Often, advocacy efforts don't work because you have not defined what the problem or need is that you are working to address, and you aren't clear about how to address it or what you want others to do about it. This worksheet will help you define the situation.

#### 1. What is the problem?

(Example: Revenue is insufficient to deliver services that meet community needs.)

#### 2. What is the cause?

(Hint: What has/has not changed in the community. Examples: Population increase/ loss of a major employer/ expiring bond/ decreased general fund resources)

**3. How do you want to solve the problem?**

(Examples: Levy, capitol project, new partnership)

**4. How will your solution address the broader needs?**

(Example: Enables service delivery at a level the community demands/expects.)

**5. What is your goal?**

(Example: Pass bond/levy/increase general fund allocation/create new partnership)

# PEOPLE: Identifying and understanding your Audience

## Who can give us what we want?

In order to achieve your library's goals, you must focus on the people who can help get you what you want.

You probably already know many of the people or kinds of people that you need to help you successfully advocate for your issue. The grid below shows some of the common categories of audience for libraries. *(Remember, effective advocacy must be targeted. You still serve everyone, but you need to get key audience groups to take action in order to be successful in your advocacy efforts.)*

AUDIENCE/SEGMENT Who are the people we need to reach? <i>If you know of others, note them</i>	WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?	WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO TAKE ACTION? (key motivators)	WHO INFLUENCES THIS AUDIENCE Who do they listen to?	PRIORITY RANKING A: Must reach in order to achieve stated goal(s) and/or will help us reach other priority audiences.  B: Need to reach in order to achieve goals.  C: Helpful, but not immediately necessary to achieve goals.
Policymakers (elected officials)		How the action meets community and constituency expectations; whether action is a wise investment (fiscally responsible)	Their Staff Constituents	
Parents of school-aged children		How the act supports or creates opportunity for success of my child	Other parents Teachers	

<p>AUDIENCE/SEGMENT</p> <p>Who are the people we need to reach?</p> <p><i>If you know of others, note them</i></p>	<p>WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE SPECIFICALLY IN YOUR COMMUNITY?</p>	<p>WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO TAKE ACTION?</p> <p>(key motivators)</p>	<p>WHO INFLUENCES THIS AUDIENCE</p> <p>Who do they listen to?</p>	<p>PRIORITY RANKING</p> <p>A: Must reach in order to achieve stated goal(s) and/or will help us reach other priority audiences.</p> <p>B: Need to reach in order to achieve goals.</p> <p>C: Helpful, but not immediately necessary to achieve goals.</p>
<p>Seniors</p>		<p>How the action delivers value for my money; helps children in my community</p>	<p>Peers Community leaders</p>	
<p>Community opinion leaders</p>		<p>How the action builds community; meets stated needs is a good use of resources</p>	<p>Policymakers Parents Seniors Peers</p>	
<p>Library Family (board, friends, foundation)</p>		<p>All of the above</p>	<p>Library customers Policymakers</p>	

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Staff (all, but are there key staff who are internal champions / opinion leaders you should ask for leadership?)		How the action benefits library customers and helps us serve the public better	Peers	
Bussiness leaders / organizations		How the action provides value to the business community; is a good use of resources	Peers Other community leaders Family members	
Community partners		How the action serves the population the partner is serving (e.g., youth, minority, communities, etc.)		

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<p>Voters 18-55 (could segment further based on your issue)</p>		<p>How the action benefits my life personally or the lives of my family members; the action is a good use of resources</p>	<p>Peers Community opinion leaders Library staff and leaders</p>	

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# MESSAGE AND VALUE THEMES

Advocacy messages are most effective when they are framed in a logical sequence that begins with the ways in which the library impacts the things a community already values.

An effective framework for advocacy is to use the themes described below: **Value, Need, Cost, Benefit, Call to Action**. Complete sample messages appear on the next page.

1. **Value:** these messages describe how the library impacts/benefits the things a community already values. To assure the broadest application possible, consider the four most broadly held community value of community vitality and stability, education/lifelong learning, health and wellbeing, economic health/return on investment. How does the library impact the things the community already values most?
2. **Need:** these messages define what is needed for the library to meet community expectations. What's required for library to meet community expectations?
3. **Cost:** these messages define the cost (in household terms). What is the cost to the customer?
4. **Benefit:** these messages describe what the community receives as a result of supporting the library. What is received in exchange for the cost?
5. **Call to action:** these messages ask the audience to take action. Depending on the audience, these messages can be more powerful when delivered face to face. What do you want the audience to do?



# SAMPLE MESSAGE THEMES

## VALUE

### Primary theme:

- **ABC Library helps create vital, stable, livable communities**  
(every story you tell should link somehow back to this theme)

### Supporting themes:

- ABC Library is an **essential resource for the education and lifelong learning** of community residents and meets a critical community need at a time when investment in education is shrinking.
- ABC Library **helps residents live healthier lives** by providing access to health information that enables community members to be better advocates for their own health and well being. For some residents we are the only health information resource.
- ABC Library is a **valuable resource to our business community** and helps that support the vitality and economic health of our community.
- ABC Library delivers an excellent return on community investment.

## NEED

- ABC Library is committed to meeting the needs of the community. Our recent survey shows that residents want X, Y, Z from our library.
- In order to meet this need, ABC Library will require XX in funding.

## COST

- The funding requested will cost [insert per household breakdown]

## BENEFIT

- The community has asked for increased hours, improved computer access, additional subscription databases for business and research purposes and more outreach programs to seniors. Full funding of ABC Library will enable us to meet these growing information technology and literacy needs of our changing community.

## CALL TO ACTION

*Be specific to the audience, but always translate your call to action to a specific form of support. Examples include*

- Tell a friend
- Support the library (volunteer, donate resources or services)
- Become a library partner
- Endorse the library's proposal
- Pass the budget
- Vote

*(Note: Before you make a call to action, be sure to check with your legal counsel about what is and is not allowed)*

# PERSUASION: Messages

What do our audiences need to know to take action?

WHAT? —What is the issue that we are trying to address?

Refer back to *Value themes*.

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Sub-messages

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SO WHAT? —Why should I care about this problem?

Refer back to *Benefit*.

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Sub-messages

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NOW WHAT? —You’ve convinced me. What can I do about this issue?  
*Refer back to **Need, Cost and Call to Action.***

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Sub-messages 

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THEN WHAT? —If the action isn’t taken, what will the result be? (HINT: What are the harms created?) Note: This is never your lead message, but may be needed if resistance to the action is encountered.  
*Refer back to **Call to Action and Value Themes.***

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Sub-messages 

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# PERSUASION: Strategies, Tools and Tactics

## HOW WILL WE REACH OUR AUDIENCES?

Successful strategies and the activities that flow from them can't be created using a cookie cutter approach. They must be based on the needs of your audiences. The tools you select must support your goals and the work you plan to carry out. Your core strategy is linking the library to existing community values, so you can tap into things people already care about. Use this worksheet to map out your approach.

STRATEGY:

AUDIENCES IMPACTED:

PRIORITY:

TIMING:

TACTIC:	BY WHEN	BY WHOM

TACTIC:	BY WHEN	BY WHOM